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LETTER DATED 1 JULY 1992 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In my statement of 29 June 1992 I promised to report to the Security Council on 1 July about the progress achieved in regard to the opening of Sarajevo airport. The purpose of the present letter is to bring the Council up to date on developments thus far.

First, the situation in Sarajevo, and in particular in relation to the airport, remains preoccupying. Fighting has continued in the area around the airport and in the nearby suburb of Dobrinja. Four United Nations military observers were wounded by sniper fire yesterday. The process of concentration of heavy weapons to locations where they can be supervised by United Nations military observers has not yet been completed to UNPROFOR's satisfaction. There is still debris on the runway, and mines remaining in several parts of the airport are still susceptible to accidental detonation. In these circumstances, UNPROFOR cannot consider the airport to be secure, and it must be stated that the persistence of fighting close to the airport continues to endanger the safety of both personnel and aircraft.

With regard to the deployment of additional infantry elements authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 761 (1992), the Canadian battalion travelling from Sector West in Croatia to take up security functions at the airport has encountered unexpected difficulties on the way. It had been hoped that an advance company of some 240 persons travelling ahead of the rest of the battalion could have arrived in Sarajevo today. However, obstacles encountered on the route have slowed its progress, and it is now expected that both the company and the battalion will arrive only late tomorrow, Thursday, 2 July.

An infantry company from France has, however, arrived today. The Air Traffic Control and Air Lift control elements offered by the Government of France have in great measure arrived today, with the remainder expected in Sarajevo shortly. An UNPROFOR convoy which arrived from Belgrade today brought in movement control and technical personnel as well as a detachment of marines who are being deployed at the airport. Rudimentary air traffic control functions are being performed by a skeleton staff pending their

augmentation by the necessary personnel and equipment. Manual discharging of cargo is taking place while UNHCR strives to make the necessary arrangements for the onward distribution of supplies that may be landed at the airport.

Though optimal conditions have thus not yet been achieved, UNPROFOR, in order to avoid any slackening of the momentum generated by the withdrawal of Serb forces from the airport on Monday, has operated the airport within the constraints described above. Several French aircraft have been able to fly in under Visual Flight Rules, bringing military personnel as well as some humanitarian aid, which has been distributed under the auspices of UNHCR. The Force Commander of UNPROFOR has advised me that his team at the airport can receive up to a maximum of eight flights a day during daylight hours, while efforts continue to improve the security of the airport, establish more complete air traffic control and improve arrangements for the unloading and distribution of relief items. I will keep the Council informed of any improvements in the capacity of the airport resulting from progress in overcoming these constraints.

In this connection, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is in regular contact with UNHCR, which is the lead agency for humanitarian relief to the former Yugoslavia, as well as with other organizations involved in the provision of emergency relief to the population of Sarajevo. Inter-agency meetings concerning these relief operations are now taking place both at United Nations Headquarters and in Geneva.

A UNHCR representative has been in Sarajevo for the last two weeks, while a UNHCR Emergency Team arrived in Sarajevo today to coordinate the relief efforts. UNPROFOR will manage the airport, provide facilities for the unloading of relief supplies and ensure air control. UNHCR will coordinate relief flights, take delivery of the relief supplies and make local arrangements for their onward transportation and expeditious and impartial distribution. Priority will be given to food aid.

I urge Governments in a position to provide airlift capacity and/or relief supplies to advise UNHCR immediately in order to avoid duplication of effort. Indeed, supplies should not be dispatched without coordination of the arrangements with UNHCR. UNHCR is also continuing to negotiate with the concerned parties the opening of land routes to Sarajevo.

In conveying this information to the members of the Council, I should like to pay tribute to the Force Commander of UNPROFOR, Lt.-General Satish Nambiar, his Sarajevo Sector Commander, Major-General Lewis MacKenzie, and the dedicated personnel under their command, for their remarkable performance in extremely difficult circumstances.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI